

Conversation with 67 year old white male, West Virginia (Transcription)

M8 B(1)

FW: It was in the news.

INF: But my aunt one time, she left the oven door down to put out a little more heat in the kitchen, it was in the wintertime, the old cat got up in 'ere to cool down to where he liked it and got in 'ere and set down and somebody come along closed the over door, so the next morning she gets up and builds a fire in the old coal range and baked the cat. She opened the door to put her bread in to bake it and there set the cat. Hide done busted off his skull and fell down and his meat just come off'n his bones.

FW: Oh, you're kidding.

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INF: It's a fact.

FW: Oh, isn't that awful.

INF: Oh, I want to tell you one, maybe I shouldn't on this thing, but I'm a-gonna tell it anyway. My aunt was sick, and my uncle cooked breakfast. So, he washed his dishes up and everything and went out and harnessed up his horses to go plowing and run his

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hands in his pockets, well he hunted for the dishrag first, he couldn't find it. So he got him a new one, went out and harnessed his horses after while and went on to work and him, he chewed tobacco, you know, and reached his hand in his pocket to get him a chew of tobacco and found his dishrag. He'd stuck it in his pocket.

FW: Do you remember any more interesting stories, oke? Like, cooking the cat?

INF: No. Not right off hand, now, if it come to a bunch of jokes I could tell you enough to run that thing crazy.

FW: Well, have you heard any good jokes lately?

INF: Well, the wouldn't be fit for that. Uh, I laughed at Jack Parker <John Parker?>, Do you know Jack Porter over at ashmeade?

FW: No.

INF: Him and me and Jack Stern, we went to Path County, Virginia, Coon hunting. Went up to Lawrence Buzzard's. And before I forgets I wanna tell you there's a Lawrence Buzzard lived up there, and <unintelligible text> and Charley Chestnut, all of 'em lived in the same hollow 'ere.

FW: Buzzard, where did you go, up in Bath County?

INF: Bath County, Virginia. Up on Little Bath Creek.

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FW: I think that's where Chuck goes every year

INF: Yeah, I expect it is. Well, now they've got a cabin back down this side of that. Way down this side.

FW: They're mountain people, aren't they Oke?

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INF: NO, not really. No. They, he used to be an Army man, the old man Lawrence Buzzard, see, he's dead now. He was a retired Army man, and, we went up 'ere and Jack supposedly had a sack to put the coon in if we caught one. We's gonna try to bring it back alive, so we tromped through the woods 'til along about six o'clock in the morning the dogs treed Up a big hollow chestnut oak, and we, proceeded to cut the thing down. It's about three or four inches all the way around. About four foot through the stump. We tied the dogs and cut the thing down. Well, we cut it down and turned one dog loose, and he went down in that thing, way down in the old hollow of the tree and it forked, and we couldn't get up in there so he backed out and he tied 'im. And was <unintelligible text> chop the coon out of it was in there, I's a kinda halfway thought maybe it just treed a possum or something. Well, I chopped in and lo and behold, right on top of the dang coon. Eighteen pounder, Paul Snead says, <kitten?> coon. I run in with the axe handle down in behind him to keep him from getting out or backing down in the tree. He reached, fooled around and got him by the hind legs and pulled that thing out it looked big as a sheep to me. Turned 'im loose, he said "Kitten, Hell," We had an old carbide light and he turned that over and the lights (were)... that's all the light we had. And, we had to hunt it then and the dogs took right after the coon right down the holler and the dogs caught it and Paul beat us all down there. Went down there and he's holding the tree dogs in one hand and the

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coon in the other hand. And they's all a-trying to bite the coon and the coon a-trying to bite Paul and the dogs, and Jack pulled out a sack and it wasn't a dang thing but an old pillow case that Maggie had used, his wife, it was about wore out. So, we fumbled around 'ere and finally got that coon in that sack and he aimed to close <unintelligible text> it and the coon just tore the thing in half in two and down the holler he went again...With that sack on him, half

of it and we caught that thing, and you know, E.S. Hurst finally pulled off his coveralls and we put that thing down in one of the legs of his coveralls and tied that coon up. He's tearing up everything we could get, we couldn't hold him he's so stout. And I brought that thing home and kept 'im about a month, fed 'im apples and stuff to eat so we could eat 'im, well I did I killed him and tried eat that thing, I'd just soon eat a tomcat or a pole cat, I wouldn't make much difference. And, that's about the best coon hunt I believe I was on.

FW: Did you ever deer hunt any, or turkey?

INF: No, I never would deer, I object to gett killed.

FW: Deer-hunting?

INF: Uh huh. There's too many crazy people in the woods shooting at anything that moves.

FW: Yeah, what about turkey hunt?

INF: Oh, I love turkey hunt.

FW: Where do you hunt?

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INF: Pocahontas County, West Virginia. I've killed two, that's all I ever killed. And, they're a smart bird, I'll tell you. They can see every direction and straight up to boot at the same time.

FW: Well, what about hearing, do they hear real well?

INF: You're dang tooting, they can hear. Why, you just break a stick and they'll <unintelligible text> now if the winds a-blowing real hard, they don't pay too much attention to you. That is, walking in the leaves. Now, if everything's still, you better not move is he's one in, 'cause he'll see you move.

FW: Do you go out real early in the morning or

INF: Oh, all hours of the day, anytime from early morning til dark.

FW: Do you just sit... How... What do you do turkey hunt?

INF: Well, if you're pretty good with a call, a lot of times you can call

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maybe you can call one out to <way?>, if you get out and don't have any luck seeing any, get you a good spot, but that's dangerous, somebody's liable to slip around and shoot you, think you're a turkey. That's how most people know about hunting and you just call kinda like a turkey would make, you know about three counts on a callar, if they's one in hearing

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distance, and if you've got him fool... and are if good enough to fool him, he'll answer you. And, you just keep calling and they'll keep coming to you.

FW: <unintelligible text>

INF: Now, a young one, you just make most any kind of a racket and bring 'im up to you, but an old resider, you better not make a sour note on 'at call, if you do he's gone.

FW: Uh huh, and they're real smart, aren't they?

INF: Uh huh, They're killed

FW: They are?

INF: Oh yeah.

FW: Oh, I thought they could get away.

INF: Now, if you hit one in the head, neck, you've got him. But, now hit him in the body or in the legs, 'em scoundrels, you can't hardly knock 'em down.

FW: You have to hit them in the head or neck?

INF: If you can hit 'em in the head or neck, or if you can hit 'em enough in the body you've got him.

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FW: Uh-huh. What other kind of hunting do you do. Other than coon and turkey?

INF: Squirrel, and rabbit, and pheasant, grouse, I think is the real name for 'em, we all just called 'em native pheasants, you know, boy they're good eating, too.

FW: I know, I've eaten them, I love them.

INF: I, too.

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FW: Are they smart? Like turkeys?

INF: No, they're, now, around here they won't fly up until you get pretty close to them. But up in Pocahontas County they're pretty wild. I reckon it's because so many hunters in there and shooting around. Well, I've walked by them and then they fly up and be in three foot of them.

FW: Where do you grouse hunt, oh, in Pocahontas County?

INF: Well, no, if I was going to do any of that, of grouse hunting, I'd do it around here, around over my mother's.

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FW: Do you take dogs?

INF: No, I never did use any dogs. I always just tromp around through the woods. In the winter time you can find their tracks and track 'em up. I know one time I told my mother, I's just an old boy, and over next to Bud Hoffman's in a valley there, lot of grapes, briar berries, I told her I was going (a-)pheasant hunting. After school, I got my wood and stuff ready and I lit out and I run into, oh, They's must have been six or eight of 'em flew up about the same time and scared me, I didn't know I had a gun. Never even fired a shot.

FW: They are real good. I think they're delicious.

INF: Oh, and you take the broth off those things after you boil them you know, get you a cup of broth and salt it and pepper it to taste, now that's as good a drink as anybody would want.

FW: You boil them and then you bake 'em, brown 'em, a little don't you?

INF: Well, now, some people do, my mother always just boiled 'em and made gravy out of them, like chicken and dumpling. And we always was foolish about gravy there at home, you know, and she always tried to fix it so we would like it the way we all liked it. Now rabbit, she used to boil 'em <unintelligible text> and fry 'em, but, I like to take 'em and just wring your hands in the back, just about a half inch apart, plumb to the bone with a knife, and just put 'em in the skillet like

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you would a chicken, and fry 'em, oh, make gravy they's the best stuff yoU ever eaten.

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FW: Have you ever eaten tame rabbit?

INF: One.

FW: Do you like it?

INF: I can't eat 'em with as good a stomach as I can the wild one,

FW: <unintelligible text>

INF: for some reason. They're good, but, no I've eat it, I've eaten it twice. Preacher Killby, one time he had some, <unintelligible text> cooked up, and a fellow gave me one, weigh about, oh, a pound and a half, two pound. It was good, but I still lean toward the wild one.

FW: Yeah, I think they're better. Do you hunt anything else other than.

INF: No, no that's about all the hunting I ever done was for, just that small game. I went a-deer hunting twice last year, over here above Hinton and saw a buck each time and didn't get a shot at either one. One of 'em I almost ran over the thing that morning, it was foggy, just the other side of the bridge there at the dam. Standing right square in the middle of the dang road, well, in our lane, and I said, Jeff, Jeff Bennett was driving, don't you hit that thing, it come right back in the truck on us. It would come right through the windshield and I could a killed it with a pistol, if I'd a had a pistol with me.

FW: Were there other people there with you.

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INF: Just two of us in the truck, <Rob Mont?> and <Allen Beatly?>, we was going up to Bob's brothers, above Hinton, and he just jumped down over the field, toward the lake, the dam there.

FW: And, none of you got any that day?

INF: No. NO.

FW: And, you don't like to deer hunt?

INF: I told Bob, him and me went the next day. <Allen?> didn't go with

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and I told Bob, I said Bob, you know he's just got one leg, I said "you and me's crazy, out here deer hunting." I says "if we killed one we couldn't get it home. I ain't got enough of breath to pull the thing and you ain't got but one leg, what would we do?" He said "My brother's got a truck and a long rope we'd get 'im at-a-way" Oh, they's a lot of fun, we used to go up in Pocahontas County, <Reen wend?> with me my wife, and the boys, and the twins, we'd camp up there about three days a-nights. Oh, we had the best time, there's several families would go, you know, and we'd cook up a lot of things to eat, and I'll tell you the best thing you can cook to eat out on a trip like that. Potatoes and corn beef, just cook your potatoes and put the corn beef in there-<unintelligible text>. Three cans of that, and about a gallon of potatoes and I'll guarantee there won't be any left.

FW: What, do you boil potatoes before you go,

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INF: No, I boil 'em there, just build us a fire I made me a thing in the shop, it was about three foot square and I welded some angle iron on it so it wouldn't warp, build up a little furnance and put that, cook on that. Now, that's some real eating. And boil your coffee in an old bucket of some kind, I finally did buy me a big coffee pot, a gallon one, white one, and just boil your coffee, wasn't no such a thing as a percolator, it's better boiled anyway, better flavor. You don't have the grounds in the perked coffee you have in that, but, you spit them out.

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